



## Water Resources Division's Aquatic Invasive Species of the Week!

FOR THE WEEK OF:

July 29–August 4, 2013

**Starry Stonewort**

*Nitellopsis obtusa*

**Origin:** Native to Europe and Asia

**Current Distribution:** Starry stonewort was reported in Lake St. Clair Michigan in 1986. It can now be found in lakes in the lower peninsula, particularly the south-eastern region. Usually seen from July to October.

**Means of Introduction:** Likely introduced by ballast water and spread by boats and/or waterfowl

**Description:** Although it looks like a rooted aquatic plant, Starry stonewort is actually a macroalga. Looks like the native plant Chara, however Starry stonewort has tiny star shaped bulbils and forms dense mats. Starry stonewort also has an irregular branching pattern, making it look tangled. Furthermore, Chara feels brittle and scaly, unlike the starry stonewort.



Photo: Grand Valley State University



**Habitat:** Slow moving waters ranging in depths from 3 feet to 95 feet.

**Impacts:** Thick mats cover lake bottoms, preventing growth of native plants and covers fish spawning habitat.



Distinctive star-like bulbil.

Photo: G. Douglas Pullman

Native Chara (left), Starry stonewort (right).

Photo: Matthew Preisser, Michigan DEQ.

**Interesting Note:** In the United Kingdom, Starry stonewort is considered to be among the most severely threatened group of plants of animals- much different than Michigan's perspective!